

Scurry hurries U.S. women into world title game

By Barry Wilner
The Associated Press

STANFORD, Calif. — Brazil's sharpshooters and China's precisionists don't scare Briana Scurry.

After all, she practices against the best front line in the world, so why worry during games?

The Americans have had little to worry about in front of their goal during the Women's World Cup. They've yielded only three scores on their way to the finals, one a ball they put into their own net.

While there have been enough breakdowns by defenders and midfielders to concern coach Tony DiCicco, he doesn't have the same anxiety about his goalkeeper.

"As a former goalie and a goalie coach, I can really appreciate what Bri does," DiCicco said as his team

began preparations for Saturday's final against China. "She challenges shooters, she plays the angles well, she knows where to be. And she's a leader on this team."

"This is a team that has a lot of scoring ability and presses the attack, and having her back there gives us the freedom to that. I can't say enough about her or how much confidence we have in her."

Scurry has three shutouts in this tournament and 52 for her career. She joined the national team in 1994 and a year later was the No. 1 keeper as the Americans finished third in the World Cup.

She backstopped the United States to the gold medal at the 1996 Olympics, making headlines not for her habit of undressing shooters, but for her promise to streak through the streets of

Athens, Ga., if the team won. It did, and off she went.

Before this World Cup, some pointed to Scurry and the defense as being suspect. While the backline has made several errors, Scurry has been solid. Or, as her teammates call her, "The Wall."

"We as defenders are going to make mistakes," U.S. captain Carla Overbeck said. "Knowing that Bri is back there makes all the difference ... Bri is a calming force. She is extremely athletic. She's very dependable. She's the best keeper in the world."

Scurry laughs when she hears such praise. But when the 27-year-old goalie from Dayton, Minn., plays as she did in the semifinals — six saves, most on difficult shots — Scurry probably deserves such adulation

"[Scurry] is a calming force. She is extremely athletic. She's very dependable. She's the best keeper in the world."

Carla Overbeck
U.S. captain

"The best?" she asked. "People say that? When I play well, I am, when I don't, I'm not. I don't know. It might be true. I'm on the best team."

Perhaps. The Chinese are 2-1 against the Americans and have looked sensational in the World Cup. They will provide the final test.

The Americans are confident their wall can match up with China's Great Wall, goalie Gao Hong. And that Scurry can handle China's best finishers, Sun Wen and Liu Ailing.

But Scurry works out every day against some formidable players, stopping shots by Mia Hamm, Michelle Akers and Shannon MacMillan.

"That's why I don't let things bother me in a game," she said. "The pressure they put on a goalie in practice is great preparation. When you've practiced against them, the game is actually easier."

So Scurry enjoyed a hard day's work, right?

"Nah, that's not good to me," she said. "I'd rather have a boring game. I'd rather not have any shots to stop."

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Horoscope by Linda C. Black

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (July 6). You can have it all this year, more money, the job you've always dreamed about and a leadership position. Don't let your fear of the spotlight keep you from throwing your hat in the ring in July. By August, you could see an increase in your revenue that would make your life a lot easier. You'll be more assertive in romance around November, so a commitment could result. By December, your work should have changed into just exactly the right thing, with your careful planning. In February, focus attention on your savings plan to ensure it's adequate to produce abundance. By April, you should be ready to accept the next promotion. Celebrate by joining friends in a favorite activity in May.

To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) — Today is a 6 — There are a couple of obstacles to overcome today, but they're so small, compared to your energy level, you'll just bounce right over them. You and your teammates will have an easy victory if you work together. Make sure, by aligning on a mutual goal before the game begins.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) — Today is a 6 — There's a clash first thing today, but don't let that knock you off your stride. Once it's handled, you'll be quite successful. Apply new skills you're learning. The mistakes you make are just another part of the learning process. Unfortunately, you can't really master any game without getting out on the playing field, so that's what you should be doing right now.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21) — Today is a 6 — This is not a good day to make a loan to a friend who tends to go through money too fast. Right now, you may have a little bit stashed away, and you really need to keep it wherever you've got it hidden — even if that's just your own pocket.

CANCER (June 22-July 22) — Today is a 6 — You might feel a little anxious today, but try and stay calm. Your chances of winning are excellent if you play your cards right. You're in a game that has pretty high stakes. You can always pass, but you might win if you take a bit of a risk. It's up to you.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) — Today is a 7 — Leo is one of the most romantic signs in the Zodiac. Did you know that Leo rules the heart? Venus is in your sign now, making you even more passionate. Something that happens today in this area of your life may surprise you, but the outcome is positive. So, don't take your sweet heart for granted.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) — Today is a 6 — You may have a block in your ability to get the money you were after. That would be a loan, or some other sort of funding. Later in the day, you'll find the money you need at home, or perhaps by selling a household item. The best thing to purchase right now would be a household item, too.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) — Today is a 5 — Your nerves could be jangled today. People are bickering and cannot seem to settle down. That's where you come in. You can help negotiate a settlement. Have the group vote, and they'll work out the compromise. All you have to do is convince them all that compromise is possible, and that won't be a problem.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21) — Today is a 6 — Your energy level should be high, and your ability to move quickly is enhanced too. You still need to be cautious. Don't do something quickly that you'll regret later. Instead, keep your overall objectives in mind. Today, they should have something to do with work and making money. If you align on that, everything else will be easy.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) — Today is a 7 — Yesterday's stress should be pretty well handled by now, and your good mood will pervade everything you do. If you have a frivolous day, make sure you also set priorities. There's a big job due tomorrow or the next day. You can figure out what it is ahead of time, you'll be in the best of all possible worlds.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) — Today is a 6 — If you and a partner were thinking of going in together on a purchase, it's an excellent day to shop. It's not going to be difficult to find just the perfect thing at the perfect price. If you don't already know where to look, ask a friend in the business. Perhaps you can get it wholesale.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) — Today is a 6 — The pace is still quick, but by now, you should be ready to keep up. In fact, you might even start getting ahead of the pack. It's because of something you've recently learned, or are in the process of learning. You're using not only what you had before, but also an innovation, and that's what's giving you the advantage.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) — Today is a 6 — You could increase your income today. There's a definite link between your work, your career and your income, and it's positive right now. Everything looks good, so if there's no way to advance in the position you've got, then change positions. You deserve to make more money. Heaven knows, you've already thought of plenty of ways to spend it.

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